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SUBJECT: BASRAH REGIONAL MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT,

REFERENDUM, SECTARIANISM, OIL SMUGGLING, SADDAM TRIAL,
SYRIA; BASRAH

SUMMARY: Discussion on the Referendum, Sectarianism, Oil Smuggling, Saddam Trial and Syria, were the major editorial themes of the daily Basrah regional newspapers from October 20 - November 4, 2005. END SUMMARY.

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SELECTED COMMENTARIES

[1A. "No Loyalties Except to Iraq"](#)
(Al-Basrah, published by the Basrah Governing Council, printed this sixth-page editorial by columnist Jawad Al-Saleem, on October 29)

"Above all, Iraqis always pledge loyalty to the Iraqi nation. This loyalty comes from a lifetime of suffering and sacrifice at the hands of vicious tyrants and their governments. The Iraqis are loyal to their country and have been working hard and to rebuild it ever since April 9th, [12003](#). We continue our efforts even though there is no electricity, no consistent general services, and an employment sector rife with nepotism."

[1B. "Arabs, When Will Your Conscience Awaken?"](#)
(Al-Samawah (Muthanna), independent, published this third-page editorial by columnist Najeh Mehdi Saba', on October 25)

"As before, other Arab nations are ignoring Iraqis' suffering while assisting foreign countries suffering from natural disasters. Their attitudes toward Iraq are as shameful as Amr Musa's, the Secretary General of the Arab League, who offered condolences to the Israelis after the Sharm Al-Sheikh attack but did not say anything about the Iraqis killed at Al-A'ema bridge in Baghdad. Qatar has donated \$100,000 to the infidel Americans, whom God has punished with natural disasters."

[1C. "Different Opinions about Oil Smuggling"](#)
(Al-Ashar (Basrah), Independent, published this front page staff editorial on October 26)

"Authorities from the Oil Production Company said that oil smuggling has become the main income for many people involved in international trade with Iraq's neighbors. They use special areas to hide their containers, some of which are buried underground, and their activities are generally carried out with the full knowledge of local authorities. Smuggling is particularly heavy in Al-Sibah along the Basrah/Dhi-Qar border. Drivers come in from Jordan and other Arab countries and travel freely through the south, carrying illegal oil from Iraqi petrol stations near the border for resale. How are they able to enter and move throughout Iraq without being challenged? It is because the security authorities are part of the operation?"

[1D. "Point of View: Referendum without Blood"](#)
(Al-Manarah (Basrah), independent, published this fourth-page editorial by columnist - Najah Mohammed Ali, on October 26)

"Whatever our opinion about the fall of the Saddam regime and the current government in Iraq elected last January, the referendum of the constitution is a new beginning and will assist in solving domestic problems that arose from non-

participation during the previous elections. The intensive security situation that surrounded the referendum has become the norm, and this high level of security promotes the regulation of security issues and ultimately protects Iraqis. We are thankful that the referendum was bloodless.

"Islamic parties encouraged people to vote for the constitution, while a large number of people from Anbar and Tikrit voted against it. This reflects the ability of Iraqis to establish a democracy that allows everyone to participate under one unified Iraqi authority, far away from American meddling.

"Most Shi'a and Kurds voted to pass the constitution and most Sunnis refused. Those who refused the constitution were former Ba'athists, the followers of Saddam, and his intelligence agents. Those Shi'a and Kurds who voted against the constitution were the ones who are afraid of a political process that allows change.

"Some people who are against the constitution want to return to the old regime. It is strange that those who are against the occupation are working with the occupiers and getting support and funding from occupation forces. We hear information about the Americans negotiating with those who oppose the occupation in order to target civilians in attacks.

"We oppose both the occupation and the former Saddam regime and we refuse to participate in elections before we reach a national compromise that does not allow criminals and killers to get away with their crimes. Today's bloodless referendum encourages us to invite everyone who supports Iraqis to make a conference for dialogue and national compromise to build a new Iraq for Iraqis."

[E](#). "The Last Line of Defense for the Syrian Regime" (Al-Manarah (Basrah), independent, published this front-page editorial by Editor-in-Chief Khalaf Al Munshidi, on October 26)

"The months-long investigation showed, as expected, that there are ties between Lebanese and Syrian intelligence, and perhaps the intelligence agencies of other countries that want Syria subjected to Security Council sanctions, similar to what happened to the Saddam regime. The United States is pulling the wool over the eyes of the world community by requesting to condemn and sentence the Syrian regime, when their real reasons have nothing to do with the Hariri assassination."

[F](#). "Which Saddam Should Be on Trial?" (Al-Manarah (Basrah), Independent, published this front-page editorial by Deputy Editor-in-Chief Moafaq Al-Refaie, on October 26)

"What occurred to Iraq is terrible. Above all, Iraqis have been traumatized both physically and mentally in an Iraq-wide genocide. It would be better to put the "Saddam phenomenon" on trial, not Saddam personally. This phenomenon may be repeated if suitable conditions in Iraq are not developed. Saddam has many friends in neighboring countries, and they should be on trial too. Those who demonstrated in Al-Dujail were not those who suffered from Saddam personally but suffered from his dictatorship, and they will demand that he be executed."

[G](#). "Observations about the Referendum" (Al Manarah (Basrah), Independent, published this page- five staff editorial on October 26)

"The writing of the draft constitution did not obey electoral norms. Writing the constitution draft was done too hastily toward the end in an effort simply to satisfy the deadlines imposed by the transitional government. People voted for the constitution just to put an end to the situation."

SATTERFIELD